



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road
Room 3409
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

Dear

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), as part of its continuing program to provide information on the health status of the U.S. population, is conducting the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS), an annual study of hospital-based outpatient care. The NHAMCS is an extension of the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS), which collects similar data from physicians in office-based practices.

Collecting data on an annual basis in hospitals, such as your own, is necessary to keep updated information on the status of ambulatory care provided in hospitals across the country. As you may remember, the purpose of this study is to collect information about the large portion of ambulatory care that is provided by hospital outpatient departments and emergency departments. The information requested includes patient demographic data, diagnoses, and the treatment and services provided. In addition, as a result of the September 11, 2001, attack on our nation and the subsequent incidents of bioterrorism, NCHS has added some new supplements in 2003 to assess the bioterrorism and mass casualty preparedness of U.S. hospitals and to evaluate the problem of emergency department crowding and surge capacity. The resulting published statistics will help hospital staff and other medical professionals plan for more effective health services, improve medical education, and assist the public health community in understanding the epidemiology of diseases and health conditions. Therefore, many organizations and leaders in the medical profession, including those providing the enclosed letters of endorsement, have expressed their support and join me in urging your cooperation in this meaningful study.

Data collection for the NHAMCS is authorized by the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, United States Code, Section 242k). Participation is voluntary. Although there are no penalties for not participating, each nonresponse makes the national statistics less accurate. All information collected is held in the strictest confidence and will be used only to prepare statistical summaries. Please be assured that there are several ways that the Privacy Rule (as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]) allows you to participate. Disclosures of patient data are permitted for public health purposes and for research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board – both of which apply to this survey. We invite you to visit our respondent Web site (www.cdc.gov/NHAMCS) for information on the survey including important policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and meeting the HIPAA Privacy Rule requirements.

Within a few days, a representative of the U.S. Census Bureau, acting as our agent, will telephone you for an appointment to discuss the details of your participation. If you have any questions regarding your participation, please call a NHAMCS representative at (800) 223-3815. We greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Sondik", is written over the printed name.

Edward J. Sondik, Ph.D., Director

Enclosures